

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF SURPACE MINING Reclamation and Referenment WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

Menorandum

To:

Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerale Management

tohu & Ward AUG 24 1984 Director, Office of Surface Mining

Recommendation for Approval of the Gordon Greek No. 2 Mine Mining Subject: Plan, Beaver Greek Coal Company, Carbon County, Brah, Federal Lesses, U-8319 and U-47925.

I am prepared to approve a permit for the Gordon Creek No. 2 Kine pursuant to the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act and subject to approval of the mining plan. My decision to approve the Beaver Creek Coal Company's permit is based on: (1) the applicant's complete permit application, (2) our permit conditions, (3) public participation, (4) review of the application by the Office of Surface Mining (OSM), (5) review by the Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining as required by the approved Urah State Program, and (6) compliance with the Rational Environmental Policy Act. The State's permit is being issued in conjunction with the Federal permit.

The Secretary may approve a mining plan for Federal lands under 30 U.S.C. 207(c) and 1273(c). The proposed operation is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

I find that the proposed operations will be in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations; and I recommend the Gordon Creek No. 2 Mine mining plan. updated through June 16, 1984, be approved.

Approval:

I approve this proposed mining plant

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Refer to: Confidential

Expandable

For additional information



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING
Reclamation and Enforcement
BROOKS TOWERS
1020 15TH STREET
DENVER, COLORADO 80202

AUG 2 1 1984

MEMORANDUM

TO:

Director Office of Synfface Mining

FROM:

Allen D. Klein, Administrator, Western Technical Center

SUBJECT:

Recommendation for Approval of Beaver Creek Coal Company's Gordon Creek No. 2 Mine Mining Plan and Permit, Carbon County, Utah,

Federal Leases: U-8319 and U-47975

I. Recommendation

I recommend approval, with conditions, of the Beaver Creek Coal Company's Gordon Creek No. 2 Mine permit for an existing underground mining operation and expansion into the Southwest Lease area (Gordon Creek No. 7). The mining plan and permit were approved under the Federal lands and State interim programs. My recommendation is based on the technical analysis, prepared by the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, and environmental assessment, prepared by the Office of Surface Mining, of the complete application. The applicant has proposed to continue underground mining on Federal coal lease U-8319 and fee coal, and begin underground mining on Federal coal lease U-47975, during the five-year permit. The permit with conditions, included with this memorandum, will be in conformance with the applicable Federal regulations, the Utah State Program and the Mineral Leasing Act, as amended. I also recommend that you advise the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, under 30 CFR 746.14 that the Beaver Creek Coal Company's Gordon Creek No. 2 mining plan is ready for approval. I concur that a bond in the amount of \$461,638.00 is adequate.

The Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining and the Office of Surface Mining (OSM), identified elements of the applicant's proposal which require conditions to comply with State and Federal law. The State permit (ACT/007/016) and conditions are incorporated into the proposed Federal permit (UT-0010, 8/84). The State regulatory authority will issue this permit in conjunction with the Federal permit.

My recommendation for approval is based on the complete mining plan and permit application, updated to June 16, 1984. I have determined that this action will not have a significant impact on the human environment.

II. Background

The proposed Gordon Creek No. 2 Mine is located in Carbon County, Utah, approximately 20 miles northwest of Price, Utah. The proposed permit area for the life-of-mine contains 2,300 surface acres, all of which are private surface. Approximately 83 percent of total coal reserves within the permit area is Federal coal. The remaining coal reserves are private fee coal. All coal within the permit has been leased by Beaver Creek Coal Company. This mine operation will not affect any environmentally-sensitive areas. As proposed, the underground operations will utilize room and pillar mining methods. Castlegate "A" and Hiawatha coal seams will be mined to yield a production rate of 860,000 tons per year. At this production rate, all surface mine operations are scheduled to cease around the year 1998.

The Gordon Creek No. 2 Mine permit application was reviewed by the State of Utah and OSM, under the approved Utah State Regulatory Program and the Federal Lands Program (30 CFR Chapter VII, Subchapter D). The Mineral Leasing Act portion of the plan was also reviewed for compliance with the applicable portion of 43 CFR 3400. The technical analysis for this mine application was prepared by Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining and the environmental assessment was prepared by OSM. These documents, other documents prepared by Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, the company's application, and other correspondence and documentation developed during the completeness and technical reviews are part of OSM's mining plan and permit application file. The Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining and OSM jointly developed proposed conditions to assure compliance with State and Federal regulations.

The Fish and Wildlife Service, Endangered Species Office has received a memorandum dated May 10, 1984, from the Office of Surface Mining as required under the Windy Gap Policy, indicating a net water depletion of 75 acre-feet to the Colorado River Basin as a result of mining operations at Gordon Creek No. 2 Mine. The Endangered Species Office responded that a review of Beaver Creek Coal Company's depletion of water from the Colorado River basin would be conducted within 30 days and an assessment for Beaver Creek Coal Company's contribution to the general fund would be made within 90 days (memorandum dated May 18,1984).

The Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining have expressed a concern over the loss of riparian habitat due to Beaver Creek Coal Company's mining operations in the Gordon Creek drainage area. As a result of this concern, these agencies placed a stipulation in Beaver Creek Coal Company's Southwest Lease exploration permit to mitigate impacts to the riparian habitat. These same agencies have requested that the same stipulation become a special condition under this permit (Permit Number UT-0010, 8/84). Special condition number 5 is included in the permit in direct response to the agencies' concern for the loss of riparian habitat during mining and reclamation operations.

The permitting process was temporarily delayed during June, due to structural damage to the sediment pond and diversion system at the Southwest Lease facilities site, resulting from heavy spring runoff. Beaver Creek Coal Company received four notices of violation and immediately repaired the damage, under the direction of the Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining, as abatement to the notices. The proposed repairs to sediment pond and diversion system were reviewed and approved by the Division prior to construction.

A chronology of events related to this mining plan application is enclosed. After the Beaver Creek Coal Company published the newspaper notice as required, no written comments, objections, or requests for an informal conference were received. Written concurrence was provided by the Bureau of Land Management, (Branch of Solid Minerals and Moab District Office); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Endangered Species Office); and the State Historic Preservation Officer.

The information in the permit application and mining plan, as well as other information documented in the recommendation package and made available to the applicant, has been reviewed by Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining staff in coordination with the OSM Project Leader. Other information included: the 1981 Bureau of Land Management's "Uinta-Southwestern Utah Final Environmental Impact Statement."